

Standards) Act, the employer is not relieved from liability, despite his reliance in good faith on such interpretations, unless it is in fact the interpretation of the agency.”¹²³ Similarly, the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, in explaining the conference agreement to the Senate, made the following statement concerning the “good faith” defense. “It will be noted that the relief from liability must be based on a ruling of a Federal agency, and not a minor official thereof. I, therefore, feel that the legitimate interest of labor will be adequately protected under such a provision, since the agency will exercise due care in the issuance of any such ruling.”¹²⁴

(c) Accordingly, the defense provided by sections 9 and 10 of the Portal Act is restricted to those situations where the employer can show that the regulation, order, ruling, approval, interpretation, administrative practice or enforcement policy with which he conformed and on which he relied in good faith was actually that of the authority vested with power to issue or adopt regulations, orders, rulings, approvals, interpretations, administrative practices or enforcement policies of a final nature as the official act or policy of the agency.¹²⁵ Statements made by other officials or employees are not regulations, orders, rulings, approvals, interpretations, administrative practices or enforcement policies of the agency within the meaning of sections 9 and 10.

RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS ON EMPLOYEE SUITS

§ 790.20 Right of employees to sue; restrictions on representative actions.

Section 16(b) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended by section 5 of the Portal Act, no longer permits an

employee or employees to designate an agent or representative (other than a member of the affected group) to maintain, an action for and in behalf of all employees similarly situated. Collective actions brought by an employee or employees (a real party in interest) for and in behalf of himself or themselves and other employees similarly situated may still be brought in accordance with the provisions of section 16(b). With respect to these actions, the amendment provides that no employee shall be a party plaintiff to any such action unless he gives his consent in writing to become such a party and such consent is filed in the court in which such action is brought. The amendment is expressly limited to actions which are commenced on or after the date of enactment of the Portal Act. Representative actions which were pending on May 14, 1947 are not affected by this amendment.¹²⁶ However, under sections 6 and 8 of the Portal Act, a collective or representative action commenced prior to such date will be barred as to an individual claimant who was not specifically named as a party plaintiff to the action on or before September 11, 1947, if his written consent to become such a party is not filed with the court within a prescribed period.¹²⁷

§ 790.21 Time for bringing employee suits.

(a) The Portal Act¹²⁸ provides a statute of limitations fixing the time limits within which actions by employees under section 16(b) of the Fair Labor Standards Act¹²⁹ may be commenced, as follows:

¹²⁶ Conference Report, p. 13.

¹²⁷ Conference Report, pp. 14, 15. The claimant must file this consent within the shorter of the following two periods: (1) Two years, or (2) the period prescribed by the applicable State Statute of limitations. See Conference Report, p. 15.

¹²⁸ See sections 6-8 inclusive.

¹²⁹ Sponsors of the legislation stated that the time limitations prescribed therein apply only to the statutory actions, brought under the special authority contained in section 16(b), in which liquidated damages may be recovered, and do not purport to affect the usual application of State statutes of limitation to other actions brought by employees to recover wages due them under

¹²³ See also statement by Representative Gwynne, 93 Cong. Rec. 1563; and statement by Senator Wiley explaining the conference agreement to the Senate, 93 Cong. Rec. 4270.

¹²⁴ Statement of Senator Wiley, 93 Cong. Rec. 4270.

¹²⁵ Statement by Representative Gwynne, 93 Cong. Rec. 1563; statements by Representative Walter, 93 Cong. Rec. 1496-1497, 4389; statement by Representative Robsion, 93 Cong. Rec. 1500; statement by Senator Thye, 93 Cong. Rec. 4452.